

CPYRGHT

Foreign Documents Division

SP-1058

4 February 1966

CIA INVOLVEMENT IN BEN BARKA CASE

BEN BARKA: AND IF IT WERE 313.-- Paris, Le Nouveau Candide, No. 240, 29 Nov/5 Dec 65

The weekly Jeune Afrique doesn't beat about the bush in the Ben Barka affair. It says in substance: "The abduction of the Moroccan leader is perhaps not the work of France, nor of Morocco, but of America.

The third hypothesis is not unlikely. The USA is high on the list of those who stand to benefit from this rather spectacular kidnapping. They had at least four reasons for desiring the elimination of the exiled leader.

1. The formation of the national union government desired by Hassan II which hinged on Ben Barka might seriously compromise the existence of US bases in Morocco.

2. Ben Barka was the promoter of a meeting of revolutionary chiefs of state which was to be held in January in Cuba, under the patronage of Fidel Castro. This meeting was of course not to the taste of America.

3. The disappearance of Ben Barka on French territory could result in compromising relations between De Gaulle and Hassan. A quarrel between these two chiefs of state would be precisely in the interests of American diplomacy.

4. This murky event, supervening in the midst of the electoral period, could cause trouble for De Gaulle, and this certainly would not displease certain American circles.

But is America "technically" capable of carrying out this operation in French territory?

The CIA Acts Alone

If we admit that the effective Lopez is a double agent, and even triple, nothing is more simple.

As is known, Ben Barka is abducted. A few kilometers from Paris, he goes from the black 403 police car to another automobile. Then, from this second vehicle to a green Chevrolet driven by a US Air Force sergeant in uniform.

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National [Highway?] 20. A turn to the left a few kilometers from Chateauroux onto a narrow road which ends at the most discrete airfield of the American bases. A Dakota whose engines are slowly turning. Ben Barka goes from the Chevrolet into the cabin.

The Dakota takes off. The operation is ended.

The Chevrolet flying the American flag did not run the risk of control. Neither the Dakota.

Incredible! The American government would never have taken the responsibility for such a surprise coup. Undoubtedly.

But this will not have been the first time that the CIA "forgets" to inform Washington.

In a Little Hamlet in Landes

The CIA, in contrast to our SDECE (French counter-espionage organization) from which it is largely inspired, is not at the disposal of the civil authorities, but at the military.

And it is well-known that the Pentagon has points of view on international policy and diplomacy which are not always those of Washington. The examples are well-known. The CIA acted as a free agent in Cuba at the time of the disastrous Bay of Pigs operation; it was the CIA which organized, without Washington's agreement, the overthrow of Mossadegh; and it was again the CIA which, on its own initiative, brought about in Laos the fall of the neutralist government of Souvannah Phouma.

Like our SDECE, the CIA has an Action Service responsible for carrying out dangerous, difficult, and more often discrete missions.

This operational commando goes by the name of Department of Covert Activity.

If the Ben Barka operation was the work of the CIA, it would be the men of the Department of Covert Activity who carried it out.

And the organizers of the operation would certainly not have come from the United States, but most likely from a little hamlet in Landes called "Le Potéau" (The Post). For it is here, in the open country, that American Base 313 is located.

This camp, surrounded by a network of electrified barbed wire, is guarded by a sort of American foreign legion made up in large part of Polish volunteers.

Inside: arms, ammunition, explosives.

But it is also a training center for officers of the Psychological Office, which is directly under the CIA.

The Pentagon has several schools of this type abroad.

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If the hypothesis advanced by Jeune Afrique is correct, it is possible, if not certain, that the organization of the Ben Barka Operation was entrusted to the men of Base 313.

And it is likewise possible that Washington was never informed of it.